

NSLDS FOCUS GROUP FINAL SUMMARY

Issue	Recommendation	Parties Involved
1 Students and schools must contact multiple organizations to get their NSLDS issues resolved. They feel there is no one to help them resolve problems with lenders, guarantors, or other schools. Some problems have lasted for years. NOTE, MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS WILL BE RESOLVED BY THE CHANGES CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED AND BY THE CHANGES RECOMMENDED THAT HAVE NO NEW COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.	SFA sponsors one organization to accept ownership of customer problems as a last resort. That organization would be given the authority to resolve errors quickly and held to performance-based requirements. Continue to use 4-FED-AID as first student contact point. Develop clear guidance for all SFA customer service groups.	Schools and Students Channels, NSLDS, GAS, FFELP Lenders, DLSS, DCS, PEPS, CPS, Perkins data providers, RFMS, PIC, ED customer service groups
2 Data providers cannot correct inaccurate information, such as identifier conflicts, in an efficient, automated, and timely manner. This results in delaying aid to eligible students. NSLDS rejects an entire record whenever there is an error in any field of that record	A. Immediate: Prioritize existing cases in which a student is prevented from receiving aid. B. Create an on-line Web capability for data providers to update certain NSLDS information. This would enable the data providers to make changes while they have schools and students on the phone. The results would be seen the next day. During Web development, implement a data correction process to allow NSLDS to correct erroneous data in an automated, timely manner via e-mail requests from data providers. C. Change the editing structure of the "regular" submission process to allow valid field groups to update NSLDS, even if an unrelated field group contains errors.	Schools and Students Channels, NSLDS, GAS, FFELP Lenders, DLSS, DCS, PEPS, CPS, Perkins data providers, RFMS, PIC, ED customer service groups
3 Currency of data in NSLDS is not adequate to support NSLDS functions. Schools consistently reported that the data in NSLDS are not current. They want more timely reporting of information changes.	Lenders: Establish a team jointly lead by SFA's Schools, Students, and Financial Partners channels to work with customers and partners to analyze the extent to which data are provided monthly and what changes are warranted. Report findings by the end of 2001. GAS: Encourage weekly reporting and electronic submissions, and work with those agencies willing to do so. Direct Loans & DCS: Report electronically to NSLDS weekly. DCS: Report electronically to NSLDS weekly rather than monthly (to begin Feb 2001). RFMS: Report Pell Grants electronically for a new year commencing on July 1 of each year. Schools: SFA to identify and provide technical assistance to Direct Loan and Pell Grant schools having difficulty meeting the current 30 day reporting requirement. Encourage schools to report more frequently. Enrollment data: Move to direct reporting of enrollment data to the major lenders. Clarify that reports from NSLDS negate the need for reports from GAS. A Pilot is in progress now. Enrollment data: Consider a regulatory change to reduce the 60 day requirement for GAS to report enrollment data to lenders and to reflect current practices and use of technology in enrollment reporting.	NCHelp Financial Partners Channel, Lenders, GAS, NSLDS SFA Program Development, DLSS, RFMS, Schools, School Channel, NSLDS SFA Program Development, Financial Partners Channel, Lenders, GAS, NSLDS SFA Program Development, Financial Partners Channel, Lenders, GAS, NSLDS
4 There are a number of interface issues between NSLDS and other systems that need to be corrected.	DCS system modifications (loan status code mapping, loan level reporting, collecting other fees, and allowing loan transfers) are in progress and expected to be operational by Feb 28. Monitor the impact of these system changes. Use the loan merge history program (expected to be operational by Feb 28) to eliminate duplicate loans, while preserving both histories of a loan. Analyze the database to determine if other duplicates can be identified and corrected. Enable schools to assign Perkins Loans to DCS using the NSLDS web pages and eliminate the current paper assignment process. Re-engineer the GA loan subrogation process and file formats to utilize data already provided to NSLDS and reduce the incidence of duplicate loans. Establish DCS, RFMS, and PEPS teams to work their respective errors and resolve data problems and identifier conflicts. Set goals for SFA data providers, such as quality and responsiveness to errors/issues and include these goals in performance agreements.	NSLDS & DCS NSLDS, DCS, GAS, schools, Perkins data providers NSLDS, DCS, Perkins data providers, Schools NSLDS, DCS, GAS, SFA Program Development, Financial Partners Channel NSLDS, DCS, RFMS, PEPS
5 Identifier conflicts have prevented loans from entering NSLDS and have resulted in student eligibility problems. Some of these problems have existed for years.	Lenders: Eliminate quarterly reporting. Report monthly, at a minimum, to guarantors. Encourage event driven data exchange on more frequent basis. Data providers resubmit all previous records with identifier conflicts to take advantage of new NSLDS process, which moves a student with old closed loans to a pseudo ID. This enables the "new" data provider to successfully add a student. DLSS did this in Nov 2000 and reduced identifier conflicts by over 50%! Time to completion is dependent on data provider responsiveness.	NSLDS, GAS, DLSS, Perkins data providers NSLDS, GAS, DLSS, Perkins data providers
6 Lack of communication and training about NSLDS cause misunderstandings and prevent data providers and users from effectively benefiting from current functionality.	Work with SFAU to develop and deliver training regularly for internal staff, external users and customer service personnel. Announce changes to NSLDS on NSLDS Web Site. Add a general information section to the NSLDS Web site that gives all viewers access to basic information and frequently asked questions. Utilize SFA download site to post NSLDS technical documents and data prep software.	Schools, GAS, Lenders, SFAU, NSLDS, SFA Business areas & systems, GAS, Perkins data providers, DCS, DLSS, PIC, Title IV Wan NSLDS, SFA Business areas and systems NSLDS & Title IV Wan
7 Many SFA (and ED) offices rely on NSLDS for day-to-day operations and major reporting responsibilities, but self-service queries are difficult using complex mainframe tools. Users either have to develop the queries for themselves or request queries to be developed by the NSLDS partner. Delays occur depending on the number of query requests and users do not have the ability to run multiple queries at one time.	Build a loan data mart, using NSLDS as the main source. Provide access for all offices that routinely use loan data and provide proven COTS tools for reporting and analysis purposes. Use the loan data mart identified to enable GAS and schools, and others to do ad hoc queries on demand using COTS tools that are user-friendly.	NSLDS NSLDS, GAS, Schools
8 Some FFEL loans are reported incorrectly on a "rolled-up" or disbursement level rather than on a loan level resulting in an inability to match loans and allow updates. Some FFEL loans do not retain the loan's unique identifier when they are sold, transferred, assigned, or have entered repayment. This results in an inability to match loans and allow updates.	Review DCS's subrogation acceptance process to determine the reason rolled-up loans are being accepted. Revise process to ensure loan level data are submitted. Fix records in NSLDS on an exception basis. Using the new loan status codes, GAS and NSLDS work jointly to close loans that were reported individually, but are now included in a single rolled-up loan. Establish a team to look at the assignment of a loan tracking number that would follow a loan from the original to the final holder. Address roll-up of loans by schools, lenders, and GA's when a loan is sold, transferred, assigned, or enters repayment.	DCS NSLDS, DCS, GAS NSLDS, GAS, DCS, DLSS, Perkins data providers
9 Loans that are consolidated can not be positively identified. This makes it difficult to determine correct subsidized and unsubsidized loan aggregates and may prevent students from receiving aid.	Implement an automated process to prorate underlying loans to determine subsidized and unsubsidized loan amounts. Schools could rely on the prorated amount to determine if a student had remaining loan eligibility, but could override it if the school had better information.	Analysis, NSLDS, CPS
10 There are duplicate Perkins Loans in NSLDS, which negatively affect students' eligibility for aid. About 15-18% of Perkins Loans are rejected due to errors each month. Some schools are not reporting at all or less frequently than monthly.	Continue the data quality effort to eliminate duplicate Perkins Loans in NSLDS and to prevent the creation of new duplicates. Provide technical assistance to Perkins Loan data providers with high error rates. Schools Channel to contact and provide assistance to Perkins schools not reporting in timely manner.	NSLDS, Perkins data providers, Schools Channel
11 "Old" open FFELP loans are not being updated in NSLDS resulting in inaccurate information being sent to schools to determine student eligibility.	Using the new loan status codes, GAS and NSLDS work jointly to close old open loans if the lender cannot be determined or the lender has not updated the loan for more than 4 years. Additionally, review the policy of denying aid to students with "abandoned" loan status. Conduct a cost/benefit analysis.	NSLDS & GAS
12 Inactivated overpayment records cause data conflicts with incoming records. Inactivation process for overpayments places blame on the school.	Identify and delete duplicate overpayment records while maintaining an audit trail. Modify NSLDS Web pages to inactivate or correct overpayments in NSLDS without placing blame.	NSLDS NSLDS